Provision for the Poor:

OR,

REASONS

FOR

The Erecting of a

WORKING-HOSPITAL

In every County.

As the most necessary and onely effectual Expedient to Promote the

LINNEN MANUFACTORY;

With Comfortable Maintainance for all Poor and Distressed people in Citie and Country.

By which all Beggars, Vagrants, *&c.* throughout the Nation, may speedily be Restrained, and for ever Prevented.

In Pursuance to certain PROPOSALS to the KING and PARLIAMENT.

With Allowance.

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Reaſons for the Erecting of a Working-Hoſpital in every County.

HAving lately publiſhed certain Propoſals tending to Promote the Linnen Manufactory, and diſburthen the Nation from the preſent Charge it lies under in maintaining its Poor; wherein, as the beſt Expedient to Promote the one and Remedy the other, I humbly offered to Conſideration the building of a Working Alms-houſe in every County: and alſo gave notice of an Engine which would very much facilitate the Work. Which mean Treatiſe, as it hath had the good luck to be very favourably peruſed, and its Deſigne approved by ſeveral Honourable and Worthy Perſons; ſo is it next to impoſſible, that it ſhould wholly avoid the common fate of Cenſure, and impreſſions of contrary Opinions. However, with all modeſt Deference to Diſſenters, I do not as yet finde any grounds for changing my former Sentiments touching the Neceſſity of building ſuch Working-Alms-houſes.

That promoting the Linnen Manufacture is the great Intereſt of this Nation, will not be denied; and that the ſame, if manag'd in a proper method, will afford a comfortable Employment, and Maintainance for the Poor, as alſo ſave many Hundred thouſand pounds, is generally agreed. But what Method or Courſe will beſt, moſt certainly, and effectually attain thoſe Ends, is the Queſtion, *viz.* whether

whether all the Poor of every ſort ſhall be employed in this Manufactory diſperſedly at home; or that a great number of them together (eſpecially Children, Single perſons, Vagrants, *&c.*) be planted in publick Work-houſes under good Government. The former may poſſibly be preferr'd by ſome, but the latter is what I have recommended, and indeed do humbly conceive it ſo eſſentially neceſſary the perfecting of that Reformation deſign'd, that without it the aforeſaid Manufactory will never be promoted to the beſt advantage, nor the Poor be any thing nigh ſo uſeful to themſelves and their Country.

That I may not ſeem conceitedly obſtinate in this Apprehenſion, I ſhall ſet down ſome of thoſe Conſiderations which have prevailed with me therein.

The Ends aimed at, are

1. The more ſpeedy and profitable promoting the Linnen Manufactory.

2. The eaſing all oppreſſed Pariſhes of the Charge of the Poor.

3. The moſt effectual Expedient to Reſtrain, Reform, and Employ all Beggars, Vagrants, *&c.* and render them ſerviceable to the Publick.

4. The good Education of Poor Children and others in religious and virtuous Principles, planting in them Habits of Induſtry, Labour, *&c.*

To accompliſh theſe, and theſe joyntly, is, I ſay, the Scope of our Endeavours; for indeed they depend one upon another. Now without Publick Work-houſes, the two latter cannot be promoted at all; and the two firſt particulars very ſlenderly, or

nothing neer ſo well as with them : For,

I. As to promoting the Linnen Manufactory, it conſiſts partly in Quantity, making more; partly in Quality, making finer than heretofore.

That with Work-houſes we ſhall make more Cloath, is not to be doubted; becauſe there the Engine before-mentioned may be uſed, which cannot be in private Families: By the help of which there may not onely be ſpun a pound and a half as eaſily as one pound, of equal goodneſs, without it, but alſo many more People Employ'd, as young Children, Perſons defective in ſome of their Limbs, *&c.* Again, is it not probable that much more Work will be done where people are kept orderly to their Buſineſs, than when they are left to their own Liberty; or at beſt, have onely an over-fond Parent to keep them to it? And is it not too true, that the Poor rarely endeavour to lay up any thing for Sickneſs or Old age, and will work by their good wills onely for Neceſſity? Which is the reaſon that our Manufactures are generally more plenty, and as cheap, when Proviſions are deareſt. Moſt of them, if they can but get Victuals, will play away half their time; which introduces habits of Idleneſs, Pilfering, *&c.*

2. As to improving Fineneſs in Spinning, beſides the advantage by the Engine of having both hands at liberty to order their Tyre, 'tis certain where many are together, there are not onely better helps for Inſtruction, but alſo emulation and ſtriving to excel each other, will much promote it: As we ſee Univerſities and publick Academies, for like reaſon,

preferr'd

preferr'd before private Schools or Tutors, in Education: Eſpecially Encouragements being given to thoſe that excel, and Correction to ſuch as deſerve it.

II. Then for the ſecond Head, *Eaſing the Pariſh of Charge*, ſince by the help of the Engine in Publick Work-houſes a Childe of four years of age may get its living, and do more work than a Childe of ſix years can do elſewhere, what an eaſe will this be to oppreſſed Pariſhes, that they may ſo ſoon ſend thither the Children of all their Poor, and many decrepit people, who are now the greateſt Burthen?

III. The third Intention is to Reform and Employ Beggars, Vagrants, *&c.* and I cannot ſee how this can at all be effectually accompliſht without Publick Work-houſes; which will infallibly effect it, and ſoon remove as well the Diſhonour as the Charge of feeding their Lazineſs, and carrying them up and down with Paſſes; wherewith now too often they take their Circuits, firſt from the North to the South, then to the Weſt, and ſo round the Land, to the great expence and trouble of Officers. This Conſideration alone methinks is enough to perſwade the Erection of ſuch Houſes, it being computed that there are above One hundred thouſand Beggars or others that want a lawful Employment in this Kingdom.

Moreover, theſe Working Hoſpitals will put an end to all vexatious and chargeable Suits and Controverſies, by which much money is ſpent between Pariſh and Pariſh, for ſettling and placing ſuch as are chargeable; and all Magiſtrates eas'd of much trouble which attends them on this account. But without ſuch

Publick

Publick Working-houſes this Grievance will hardly be removed; which at preſent, and for ſome time paſt, hath been ſo conſiderable, that I know not but the money that is ſpent this way in one County within ſeven years time, may build an Houſe by which they may be freed from it for ever.

Furthermore, by means of theſe County-Work-houſes, the Inequality of Taxations and Charges whereby one Pariſh is greatly oppreſs'd with the multiplicity of Poor, when at the ſame time other Pariſhes are not at a quarter-part of ſuch Charge; which Intollerable Grievance can no way be Reformed ſo effectually, without ſuch County-Work-houſes.

IV. Nor is the fourth Head, *viz.* Bringing up of Poor Children, &c. in religious Nurture and honeſt Labour, leſs worthy of our Care; not to be at all, or at leaſt no way ſo well and effectually brought to paſs, as by theſe Publick Nurſeries of Induſtry, under regular and prudent Government. And how ſad is it to conſider how many thouſand poor Children, by the folly, the negligence, the vitiouſneſs, or ill example of their Parents, inſtead of enjoying the bleſſing of good Education, ſpend their moſt pretious, becauſe moſt teachable, years, and moſt ſuſceptible of good or ill to influence the reſt of their life, either idly in playing and wandring up and down, or what is worſe, Begging or Pilfering, as Hedge-breaking, Wood-ſtealing, or the like; without ever being taught the Principles of Religion, their Duties to their Parents or Superiors; nor inſtructed in any Trade or Labour to get an honeſt Livelihood. Which becomes no leſs miſchievous to Society in general, than fatal to themſelves: For undoubtedly *Idleneſs in Youth is the Seed-plot of the Hangmans Harveſt.*

Beſides all this, until ſuch Work-houſes be reſolved on, we can never be certain that the hands of all idle people ſhall be Employed, or the Manufactory effectually proſecuted: And who

who then will be ſo ventrous on Uncertainties to plant Hemp and Flax enough to carry it on, ſeeing all things remain as before, *viz.* much Talking, and little Doing; many good Laws and profitable Inventions, but a want of due Method to make them effectual?

But poſſibly, inſtead of ſuch inviting and encouraging Incitements for planting Hemp and Flax, ſome may deſire that the Land-occupiers may be impoſed upon and forc'd by a penal Act, to ſow a ceatain number of Acres thereof, until they become as plenty as Peaſe-ſtraw.

To which I anſwer, It ſeems unreaſonable to lay ſuch an Impoſition, before a certain right Method be eſtabliſht for the effectual Manufactoring of the ſame: For if it ſhould, what will be the ſequel? May not our Hemp and Flax be as burthenſom as our Wooll? Yea, may not *England* be famous all the world over, as abounding with huge ſtocks of *Wooll*, *Hemp*, *Flax*, **Poor People**, and **Beggars in abundance**, and all for want of Publick County-Working-houſes of Confinement, for adminiſtring Inſtruction, Encouragement, and Correction?

Or if the moſt neceſſary Method for Adminiſtration of Juſtice, and Improvement of profitable Inventions be rejected, how can we reaſonably lay an extraordinary Impoſition on Linnen, before we are certain our Method will bring idle people to Induſtry for our ſupply?

But infallibly to prevent ſuch doing a good and neceſſary Work by halves, and to avoid theſe diſcouragements and ſore Evils, I cannot but ſtill ſollicite for ſuch Publick Working-Houſes: Then may we readily plant Hemp, Flax, *&c.* Becauſe we know that all idle hands, either at Home, or in the Work-houſes, will certainly be employed induſtriouſly in taking off and Manufactoring the ſame, as it grows. And why any man ſhould be very eager to force the raiſing of a great Stock, and yet be prejudiced againſt the certaineſt Expedients for the moſt ſpeedy and advantageous promoting and manufacturing the ſame when raiſed, my weak Capacity can give no good reaſon.

But muſt adde, That this Manufactory may be accompliſhed

plished with more ease and comfort to the Poor, when they are Incorporated into such great Bodies, where a Granary may be more beneficial, than it can be otherwise to afford Bread cheap and plenty amongst them, when Corn is scarce and dear.

As also, That however these Working Almes-Houses may be contemned, and the Proposer and his Expedients for expedition rejected; I doubt not but it might easily be made appear, that by means of such Work houses, the **Woollen Manufacture** may be greatly promoted.

In fine, Why should we contemn the most infallible Expedients, and which we see practised with success? It's judged, that to one Pickpocket, Cutpurse, *&c.* in *Amsterdam*, there are an Hundred in *London*; and to one sturdy Beggar in *Holland* (in time of Peace) there are four hundred in *England*; And what's the Reason? They have Publick-Work-houses in every City, for perpetual confinement in cases requiring the same. Wherefore, to attain the like happy Reformation in *England*, without such Houses aforesaid, is next to that which is impossible. Wherefore if our designe be rather for the Publick Good, than it is to gratifie our own Fantasies, why should we reject the effectual Means, now in being in *Holland*; where besides the *Rasp-houses* in *Amsterdam*, there is a *Spin-house* in every City?

If any object against these great Work-Houses, as being too chargeable, *&c.* I shall refer them to my Book lately published, entituled, *Proposals for Building in every County a Working Almes-houses, for promoting the Linnen Manufactory*, sold by *R. Harford* at the *Angel* in *Cornhil*, and Mrs. *Walton* at the foot of the Parliament-stairs, where I doubt not but my Answer to that and other Objections, may to the Judicious be satisfactory. Only adding here, to such as imagine the Building of these Houses will require too much time; That they may be erected and compleated assoon as the Hemp and Flax can be raised and prepared: And at the farthest, all may be finished in Two Years time.

R. Haines.

FINIS.